

The Vancouver Island Bonsai Society

NEWSLETTER

October 2016



2014 VIBS Officers

President: Mark Paterson

Vice President: Vacant

Past President: Bob Taylor

Treasurer: Larry Phillips

Secretary: Jim Haskins

Door & Raffle &

Library: Jim & Kathi Morrison

Newsletter & Website: John Mitchell

Also: Maurice Bombezin,
Randy Kowalchuk

Next Society meeting: Monday, October 17th, 2016

7:00 pm at Couvelier Pavilion, HCP

Scheduled: Fall fertilizer & winter care

Show & Tell: Examples from the David DeGroot workshop and bonsai in fall colors.

Expert advice: There is a standing invitation to all members to bring in any tree that you would like an opinion or advice on – tap into years of collective bonsai experience.

Club activities: Please share your thoughts on activities that you would like to see. The Activities Calendar on the VIBS webpage has been updated for 2016

<http://www.victoriabonsai.bc.ca/bonsaiCalendar.htm>

Raffle table: Please consider bringing an item for the raffle table - it is a good fund-raiser for club events. Please bring only those items that are directly related to bonsai or pre-bonsai, viewing stones and general horticulture. Lately there have been a few decidedly odd items show up & that are left over at the end of the night and must be disposed of.



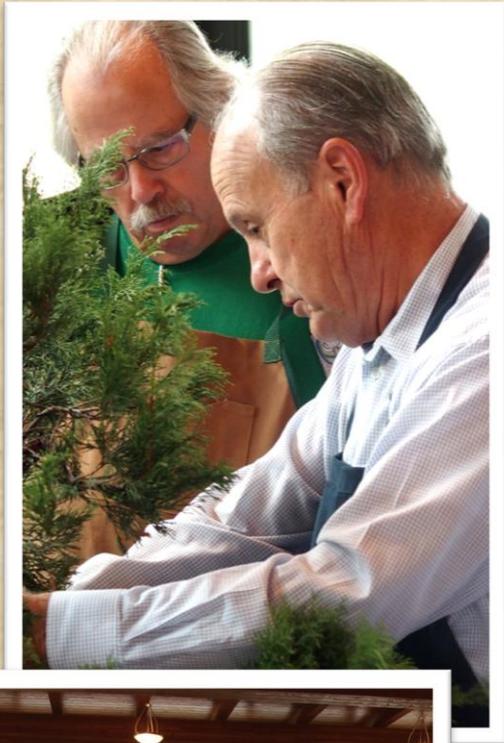
Is it any wonder that Trident Maples are a bonsai favorite?

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Greetings Everyone!

The big bonsai event of the month in Victoria was the return of David DeGroot for another styling workshop at the Hort Centre. An interesting selection of bonsai and pre-bonsai were presented by the workshop participants. As usual David passed on loads of information as he assisted and instructed in the styling of the trees. Here are a few photos of this event:



... more photos next month!

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Club member & Past President Randy K. brought this sad news to my attention this week:



Arthur Skolnik of Toronto, owner of Shibui Landscaping passed away suddenly on Jan. 27, 2016 while on holiday in Antigua. Arthur visited this club a number of years ago and put on a workshop for members.



Left: George Heffelfinger pays close attention to Arthur's advice.

Right: Bob Taylor (left) keeps a close eye on Arthur's technique.

That's an interesting mass of foliage in the foreground ... a workshop presenter's nightmare!



(The following article appeared in Billboard the newsletter of the Bonsai Society of Upstate New York Volume 37 Number 5 January 2010):

Arthur Skolnik's 12 Rules for Bonsai

Here are my **Dozen Design Denotations**, but first, a definition of Bonsai that I really like: **"The art is practiced by training young (age doesn't matter) trees to acquire and display the features of age while remaining small."**

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Arthur Skolnik's 12 Rules for Bonsai (cont'd)

Here's another: "... to reproduce the dignified beauty of a tree that has survived exposure to the elements."

1. All trees have a front or best view. The Japanese say the trunk of a tree is like the soul of a tree and when you can see the trunk, you have a good idea of what type of life the tree has had or what type of conditions the tree has endured.
2. All trees should lean (slightly) toward the viewer, branches too. Even a slanting style tree... it leans to one side or the other making it a slanting style but here too, the top and branches leans toward the viewer.
3. We're not trying to make exact copies of trees in nature; we're trying to symbolically represent the feeling and beauty of trees in nature. Arguably the most important feature of a great Bonsai is the buttress or flare of the trunk at ground level. This is a strong feature of age.
4. A tapered trunk and branches are extremely important in creating the feeling of a large and majestic tree. The bottom is thick, the top is thin and ideally, there is no sudden change in thickness. This applies equally to branches.
5. The silhouette of the foliage mass should be contained within a scalene triangle. Looking down on each branch, the foliage here too should be contained within a scalene triangle. Taking it one step further, looking through each branch, the foliage nearest the trunk should be thickest and thinnest near the tip... a triangle too.
6. Branches should never be stacked, one on top of the next. They aren't in nature because upper branches would shade lower ones. Ideally, the branch placement should follow one of these patterns: first branch on the left or right, next branch on the opposite side a little higher up, next branch a little higher up, in the back. Another pattern would be where the back branch is positioned between the two side branches. Using letters only, here it is again: l.r.b. or r.l.b. and l.b.r. or r.b.l. Follow this pattern roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the tree. At that point, up to the domed top, front branches, to create a bit of mystery, are acceptable. Skolnik—Cypress
7. The spaces between branches should get smaller and smaller the higher up the tree you look.

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8. The first branch should be positioned $1/3$ of the total length of the trunk, up from the bottom.
9. The longest branch should be the first and the lengths of the rest of the branches should diminish as you look up the tree. That's how the triangular silhouette is created.
10. The spread of the branches should be $2/3$ the height of the tree.
11. In designing old trees with thick trunks, a pleasing proportion of trunk height to width should be 1 to 6.
12. Don't ruin a nice tree trying to make it perfect.

There are 3 aspects to learning Bonsai design.

1. Study trees in nature. Familiarize yourself with the horticulture/biology ways trees grow and the effect of the environment of them.
2. Learn and understand the rules for design by studying/critiquing trees in books/exhibits and practice applying them.
3. Blend #1 and #2 without being rigid along with a dose of creativity. A tree perfectly designed, using rules as your only guide, may end up looking 'stiff' but a tree without some order may look unruly. If you study the scales in music or color charts in painting, you will slowly learn that bending the rules combined with an experienced eye for balance, harmony, rhythm, proportion etc. often means breaking rules in order to create something artistic and unique which reflects your personality (as well as the tree's). If your full time job and income are not based on growing and selling Bonsai, Bonsai should be fun. These are the basic rules to follow. But if you study the scales in music or color charts in painting, you will slowly learn that bending the rules combined with an experienced eye for balance, harmony, rhythm, proportion etc. often means breaking rules in order to create something artistic, creative and which reflects your personality. Remember, what is essential is invisible to the eye.

... Arthur Skolnik

Arthur was also a very well-respected authority on Viewing Stones. He contributed articles to [Waiting To Be Discovered](#), the newsletter of the North American Viewing Stone Society that was published between 1996 and 1998.

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The Truth About Bonsai: As one enters the beautifully designed bonsai collection at the North Carolina Arboretum, the following words are displayed:

"There is an image of bonsai as a mystical, magical practise belonging to an ancient culture, requiring apprenticeship to a master and knowledge of foreign terms.

Bonsai is actually an engaging, challenging intimate form of horticulture that functions as a form of creative expression.

Based on a one-to-one relationship between person and plant, it requires practice, persistence and patience. Bonsai gardeners lovingly tend to their subjects, and the plants respond with health and beauty. The art of bonsai is a study in vitality produced by the thoughtful and careful management of perpetual growth".

Happy Birthday George!

One of bonsai's greatest friends will be 90 on October 15th! George Heffelfinger has been head-over-heels about bonsai since the late 1970s. Known all over this continent for his passionate enthusiasm for little trees in pots, George has had a warm personal relationship with the most notable practitioners of this horticultural art form in North America. George has served as President of the American Bonsai Society of which he is a Life Member and former Journal editor, Past President of the Vancouver Island Bonsai Society (another Life Membership) and a faithful correspondent to many, many bonsai practitioners of renown throughout the U.S. and Canada. Happy Birthday George from your countless friends in the bonsai hobby!



Photos: John M

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Winter Is Sure To Come—Some Suggestions A Reprint from the Dungeness Newsletter and Jim Scharschmidt

Root hardiness is a complex problem. Root hardiness has absolutely nothing to do with the USDA published zone hardiness for trees. Most roots tolerate temperatures only as low as -9 to -4 degrees C (15 to 25 degrees F). In fact, young roots have tolerances even less than that. Unfortunately, not much scientific data is available on root hardiness. The following graph shows some data based on personal experience and can be considered guesswork only:

SPECIES	KILLING TEMPERATURE OF YOUNG ROOTS		KILLING TEMPERATURE OF MATURE ROOTS	
	F	C	F	C
Trident Maple	25	-4	20	7
Japanese Maple	23	-5	18	-8
Amur Maple	19	-7	10	-12
Chinese Elm	25	-4	22	-6
Chinese Quince	23	-5	18	-8
Japanese Quince	20	-7	12	-11
Japanese Apricot	26	-3	21	-6
Cherry (most types)	10	-12	10	-12
Shimpaku Juniper	19	-7	12	-11
Rocky Mountain Juniper	10	-12	-20	-29
California Juniper	24	-4	18	-8
Eastern White Cedar	12	-11	-20	-29
Ponderosa Pine	12	-11	-10	-23
Pitch Pine	16	-9	5	-15
Japanese Black Pine	22	-6	10	-12
Japanese White Pine	19	-7	0	-18
Scots Pine	16	-9	0	-18
Satsuki Azalea (large leaf)	25	-4	18	-8
Satsuki Azalea (small leaf)	20	-7	8	13
Bald Cypress	24	-4	10	-12
Ezo Spruce	18	-8	-2	-19
Wisteria	22	-6	17	-8

The real key is to protect the foliage from drying winds, to protect the roots from extreme low and wide fluctuations in temperature, and to protect the trees from animals and fungi. From the bonsai clubs in Victoria and Sequim the following information seems relevant to most of us in the Puget Sound area: In February of 1989 there were record low temperatures. The worst day temperatures were: -12, -11, -10, -9, -7, -6, -6 and -6 degrees C, (10, 11, 14, 15, 19, 21, 21, and 22 degrees F), all in the first two weeks of the month. And there was no snow until the 17th, plus days of high winds. The following spring, notes were compared and the following conclusions reached: The most damage came to Juniper procumbens, Shimpaku juniper, Chinese Elm, all Acer palmatum (Japanese maple), Acer buergerianum (Trident maple), Acer ginnala, then Pyracantha, Ligustrum, Cotoneaster, Carpinus (Hornbeam), Fagus (Beech), Acer campestre (Hedge maple), Tsuga (Hemlock) and Nishiki pines. There was practically no damage to stock still growing in the ground! One should always keep an eye on the forecast and tuck anything that might be damaged into a garage or covered space. A good covering of snow, even if shoveled onto your plants to cover them, will provide some insulation.

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The Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society presents the 17th annual
Japanese Cultural Fair



Savour the wonderful tastes of Japan (including delicious sushi, bento boxes and sweet manju desserts).

Experience demonstrations of ikebana, tea ceremony, bonsai, shodo, martial arts, and kimono dressing.

Enjoy performances by Uminari Taiko, the Furusato Dancers, Satomi Edwards (Koto), the VJHLSS Children's Dance Group and Choir and many more!

10 am - 4 pm
Saturday, October 22nd, 2016
Esquimalt Recreation Centre
527 Fraser Street
A Free Family Friendly Event
With Kids Activity Area



For more information visit
www.vncs.ca or [facebook.com/vncs.ca](https://www.facebook.com/vncs.ca)

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Membership Renewal / Application Form 2017

I wish to renew my membership _____ or I wish to apply for membership _____ (new member)

Attached is \$30.00 for single membership _____ or attached is \$35.00 for family membership _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, Province _____ Postal Code _____

Phone (Home) _____ Phone (Other) _____

Please provide your e-mail address for information about various activities and notification of the posting of the Newsletter to the website: _____

If you are mailing this form, please mail to:

Vancouver Island Bonsai Society
Membership Coordinator
PO Box 8674
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 3S2



A Hamamelis (Witch-Hazel) hybrid at the Hort Centre - not a bonsai but irresistible Fall colour ... and it's kind of a "witchey" month!